

Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Celebration May 4, 2007

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. *Sientese.* [Laughter] *Bienvenidos.* Thank you for coming. Welcome to *el jardin de las rosas*. It's a great place to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. As a matter of fact, I've been looking forward to celebrating this so much that we decided to have our own *cuatro de Mayo*. [Laughter]

Thanks for coming. Welcome. I'm honored to celebrate this important holiday with you all. On Cinco de Mayo, we remember our close friendship with Mexico, and we honor and remember the many contributions Mexican Americans have made to our Nation.

I'm sorry Laura couldn't be here. She's coming back from having camped out in a national park with high school classmates. I'm honored to be here with the Attorney General of the United States, *mi amigo*, Alberto Gonzales, *y tambien* the Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Gutierrez, *y su esposa*, Edi. I'm glad to be here with Dr. Emilio Gonzalez, Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and Gloria. I appreciate my friend, Emilio Estefan, for arranging this entertainment here in the Rose Garden. I welcome the Ambassador to—Mexico, Arturo. *Bienvenidos.* I'm glad you're here. Thanks for coming.

As you can see, I'm standing up here with a mariachi band, initially from Monterrey, Mexico—Los Hermanos Mora Arriaga. Welcome.

Band members. Thank you. *Gracias.*

The President. *Si.* Brothers and sisters—I think you told me you had 13 brothers and—

Band members. Fifteen.

The President. —15 brothers and sisters. [Laughter] We believe in family values. [Laughter]

I want to thank those who wear the uniform of the United States. Thank you for serving.

Cinco de Mayo celebrates a great Mexican victory at the Battle of Puebla. On May 5th, 1862, an outnumbered band of Mexican soldiers held their ground against a professional European army. They triumphed against overwhelming odds. The victory inspired Mexican patriots in their heroic fight for liberty and for democracy. Cinco de Mayo is a joyful day in Mexican history, and it's an important milestone in the history of freedom.

The people of the United States are proud to celebrate Cinco de Mayo with our Mexican neighbors. Our two countries continue to stand for the principles that the Mexican Army defended at Puebla. We believe that democracy represents the true will of people. We believe that freedom is God's gift to every man, woman, and child on the face of this Earth. And we believe that both our nations have a responsibility to share the blessings of liberty.

The United States and Mexico are bound by strong family ties. Mexican Americans have enriched our culture by sharing their musical and artistic talents. They've strengthened our economy by opening new businesses and expanding trade. And they have made our Nation more hopeful by leading lives of faith and family.

Mexican Americans have also defended the United States by wearing our Nation's uniform. Today, Mexican Americans in uniform answered the call to advance the cause of liberty, and this Nation is really grateful for your service and your sacrifice.

The patriotism of Mexican Americans reminds us that one of our greatest strengths is the character and diversity of our Nation's immigrants. Immigration has made our land a great melting pot of talent and ideas. It has made America a beacon of hope for people in search of a better life.

In Washington, we're now in the midst of an important discussion about immigration. Our current immigration system is in need of reform. It is not working. We need a system where our laws are respected. We need a system that meets the needs of our economy. And we need a system that treats people with dignity and helps newcomers assimilate into our society.

We must address all elements of this problem together, or none of them will be solved at all. We must do it in a way that learns from the mistakes that caused previous reforms to fail. I support comprehensive immigration reform that will allow us to secure our borders and enforce our laws, to keep us competitive in the global economy, and to resolve the status of those already here, without amnesty and without animosity.

Comprehensive immigration reform is a vital goal for our Nation, and it is a matter of deep conviction for me. I will continue

to work closely with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle to build a consensus for reform so Congress can pass and I can sign a comprehensive immigration bill into law *este año*.

The United States and Mexico share a great border, and we share a hopeful future. Tomorrow people on both sides of that border will celebrate freedom and the courage of all who defend it. I wish you a happy Cinco de Mayo. *Que Dios los bendiga a los Estados Unidos y tambien Mexico.*

And now, Los Hermanos Mora Arriaga.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:54 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Emilio Estefan, Jr., chairman, Estefan Enterprises, Inc.; and Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Resignation of Jack D. Crouch II as Deputy National Security Adviser May 4, 2007

Dr. J.D. Crouch II came to the White House in January 2005 to serve as my Deputy National Security Adviser. J.D. has served our country with great distinction during a critical period in our history, as we confront new challenges and pursue a global war on terror. In the past 2½ years, his accomplishments have been many. He was at the forefront in devising and implementing the new strategy to help build a peaceful, stable, and secure Iraq. He was

instrumental in developing the new national security strategy that charts a course for advancing our interests abroad, enhancing global security and liberty, and protecting the American people. J.D. is leaving the White House, but Steve Hadley, all his colleagues, and I have benefited greatly from his wise counsel and tireless commitment to public service.